

# THE ROARING TWENTIES

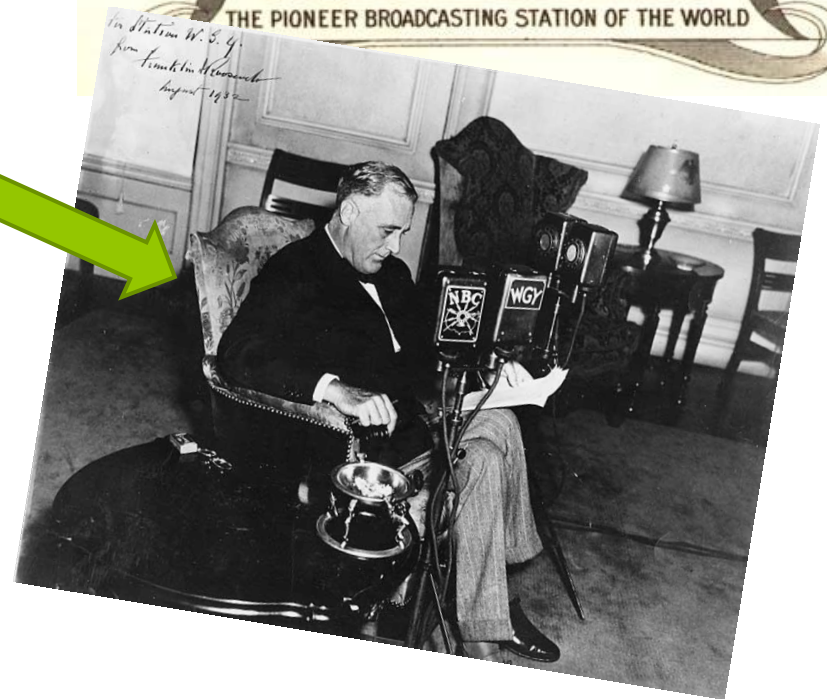
## GUIDED READING ACTIVITY

# Changing Culture in the USA

Dynamic Changes in American Culture During the 1920s...

# Entertainment and Mass Media

- Radio broadcasts began for the first time during the 1920s – at KDKA in Pittsburgh, PA.
- By the 1930s, figures like Franklin Delano Roosevelt were using the radio to convey important messages. FDR's "Fireside Chats" were very influential.





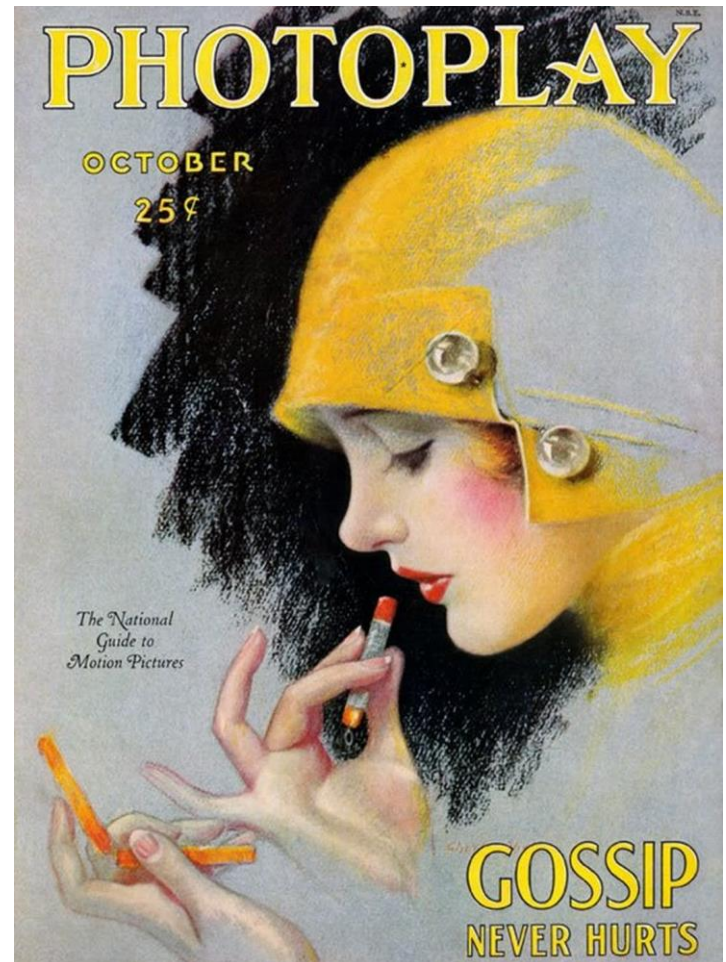
# Hollywood and the Movies

In the 1920s, the movies became American's favorite form of recreation. It was a way to escape the difficulties of the Depression, too. Hollywood became the center of the film industry during the 1920s, and “talkies” – films with sound – became popular for the first time.



# Newspapers and Magazines

- Published daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly, newspapers and magazines established wide circulations in the 1920s and 1930s. Newspapers and magazines shaped cultural norms and sparked fads!



# The Scopes Monkey Trial

When John Scopes, a substitute science teacher was arrested for teaching Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution in 1925 – in violation of Tennessee's Butler Act – a show trial ensued. It pitted the notorious defense lawyer Clarence Darrow against William Jennings Bryan, and it ended with many Americans in opposition to strict religious doctrines being taught in public schools.



# Flappers and Female Voters

- With the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution in 1919, women were allowed to vote in national elections.
- Flappers – liberated women who challenged gender roles during the 1920s, continued the movement towards women's liberation during the Roaring Twenties...





# The Rise of the Ku Klux Klan

- Really? Yes, really.  
During the 1920s, membership in the Ku Klux Klan skyrocketed to over five million members. Racists, anti-Semites, anti-Catholics, and nativists all found a home in this violent organization. During the 1920s, the Klan marched down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington D.C.

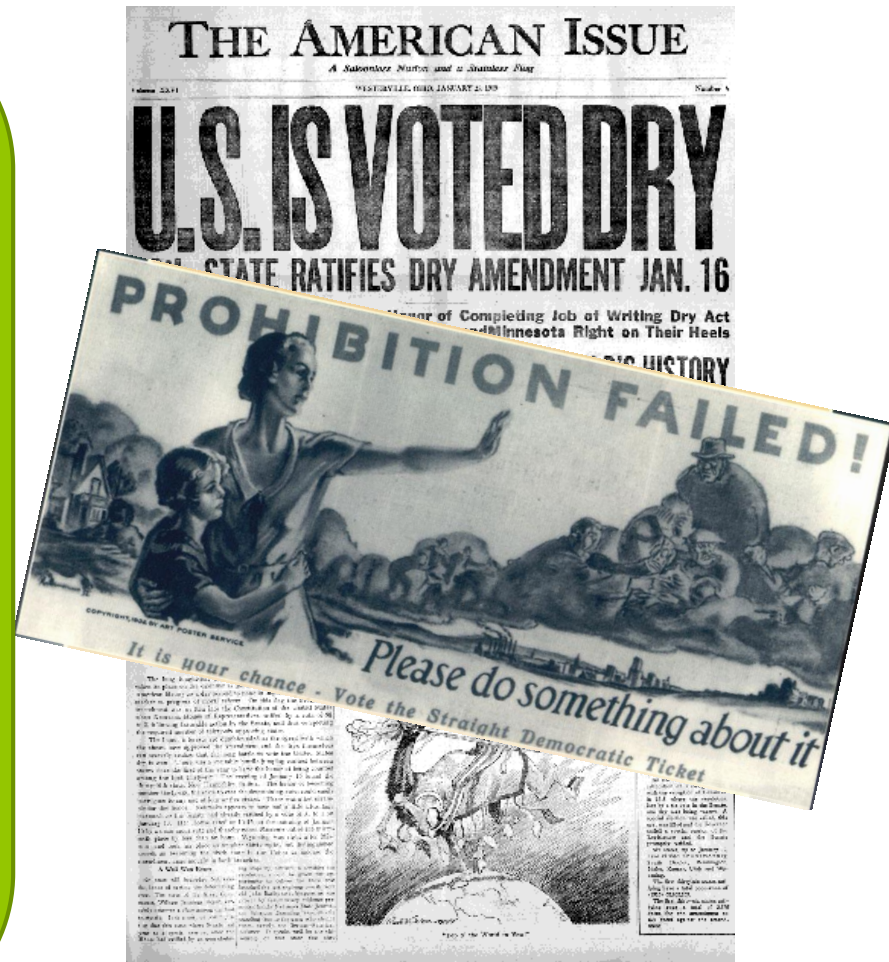


Although most Presidents did not seek out the endorsement of the Ku Klux Klan, many members of the US government were card carrying members, and many more tacitly approved of the organization.



# Prohibition and Speakeasies

Americans were divided over the issue of Prohibition even as it was enacted. Many Americans considered Prohibition of alcohol a wonderful idea – for anyone but them! Indeed, it was never illegal to drink alcohol, only to make it, transport it, or sell it. Those who had it could drink up! By the 1920s, so much organized crime had developed in the United States to satisfy the enormous demand for alcohol, that many supporters of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment had begun to reconsider their views. In 1933, the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment was passed, and one of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's first acts was to bring back beer! (He was re-elected four (4) times.)



# Textbook Answers on the 1920s

Essential Knowledge About the Roaring 1920s

# Harding's Return to “Normalcy”

No, that's not a word. But Harding struck a nerve by promising a return to “normalcy,” because Americans were tired of decades of progressivism, reforms, and moral crusades to reshape the political order of the world, like World War I.



Warren G. Harding promised American less – and boy, did he deliver. Corruption and scandal were the order of the day while he was President of the United States.

# Charles Forbes and the Veterans Administration Scandal of the 1920s

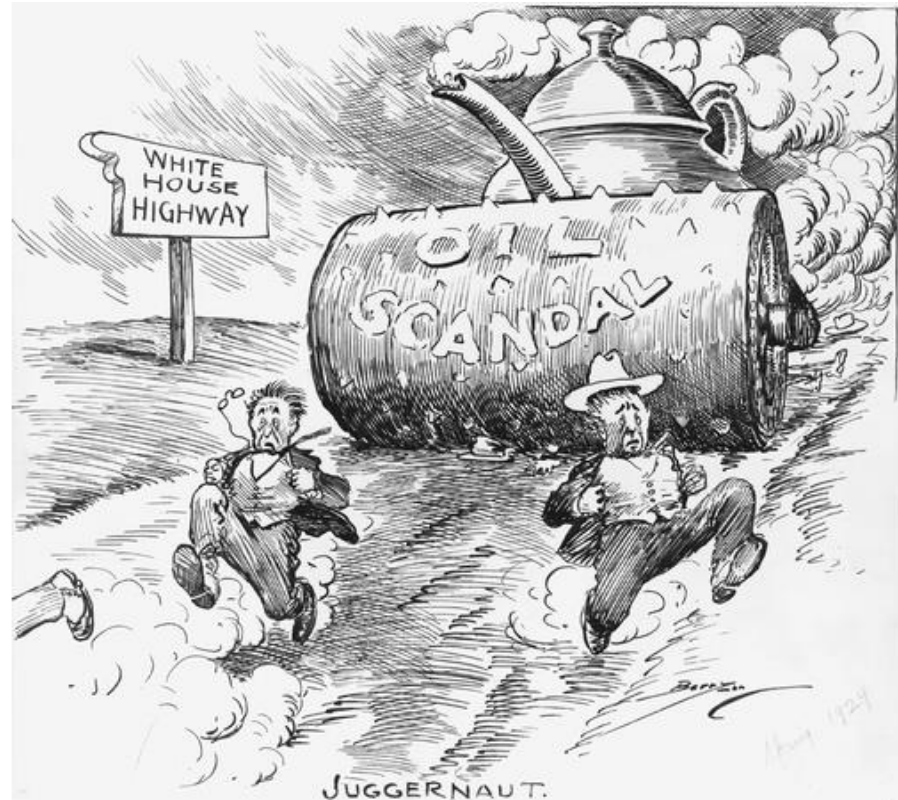


Forbes literally stole the pensions from disabled soldiers – all veterans of the fighting in World War I. The legless, the armed, the blind, and shell-shocked were all robbed. These proud, wounded heroes who had been shot at, gassed, and burned, lost over \$200 Million to Forbes greed.



# Teapot Dome Scandal

Meanwhile,  
Secretary of the  
Interior Albert T.  
Fall was selling  
the government's  
oil reserves to the  
highest bidder,  
and keeping the  
profits for himself!



# Supply Side Economics

OK, here's the idea. You cut taxes on the rich, and the rich – out of the kindness of their hearts – spend all their money creating new businesses and providing good jobs for the poor. And pay them well, and everybody gets rich together. (Except not very often!)

But, here's the thing! In the 1920s, this actually worked – because the highest tax brackets in the country would tax the wealthiest citizens at around 80%! Today, the highest tax brackets are closer to 42%, and most of the largest wealthiest corporation in the country pay virtually no taxes.

# Return to Isolationism...



THE GAP IN THE BRIDGE.

The idea that during the 1920s and 1930s the United States returned to a foreign policy of isolationism is wrong in two ways. First, the United States was never an isolationist nation. Secondly, the isolationism we did engage in was aimed exclusively at Europe. It's true, though that the US was isolationist in its policies toward Europe during this period. And, we would pay for it in blood when World War II began.

# Mass Production – Assembly Lines

During the 1920s, the United States became much more accomplished in the manufacturing of goods than we ever had been previously – producing enough items to satisfy the needs of national markets. The most impressive leaders of the industry were automobile manufacturers like Henry Ford, who revolutionized manufacturing with the use of the assembly line.





# Flyer and The Spirit of St. Louis

- Orville and Wilbur Wright were the first in flight, at Kitty Hawk, NC on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1903.
- Less than twenty-five years later, Charles Lindbergh flew the Spirit of St. Louis across the Atlantic Ocean, from New York to Paris.



# KDKA – Pittsburgh, PA; NBC; CBS

- KDKA was the first radio station, but others followed quickly.
- Nationally syndicated stations began to organize in the middle to late 1920s, starting with the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) in 1926 and the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) in 1928.
- By 1928, aspiring Presidential candidates had figured out the game! They spent well over \$1 Million advertising themselves on the airwaves during that years Presidential campaign.



David Sarnoff, mastermind behind NBC.

# Using Credit to Pay Debts?

(Yes, please!)



Using credit to pay debts became much less shameless and more common during the 1920s. (And during the 1930s, economic collapse followed...)

# Uneven Prosperity – Poverty

Women

African-  
Americans

Native Americans

Immigrants

Southern Farmers





# Helping Farmers - Subsidies

American farmers were some of the most productive in the world, but unfortunately, success in farming can lead to a problem – oversupply. This drives down the price of farm goods, and often leads to poverty instead of prosperity. The Congress during the late 1920s determined to purchase excess crops and sell them – at a loss – overseas, to help maintain the price of goods in American markets. Calvin Coolidge, who believed in laissez-faire economics, vetoed this bill, but Congress overrode it.



Over production was the enemy of the American farmer during the 1920s.

# Sacco and Vanzetti

The two Italian immigrants had virtually no evidence presented against them during their trials. Yet, they were both convicted and sentenced to death. Most observers concluded that the judge was out to get them from the start because they were both immigrants and anarchists.



# 5 Million Klansmen in the KKK

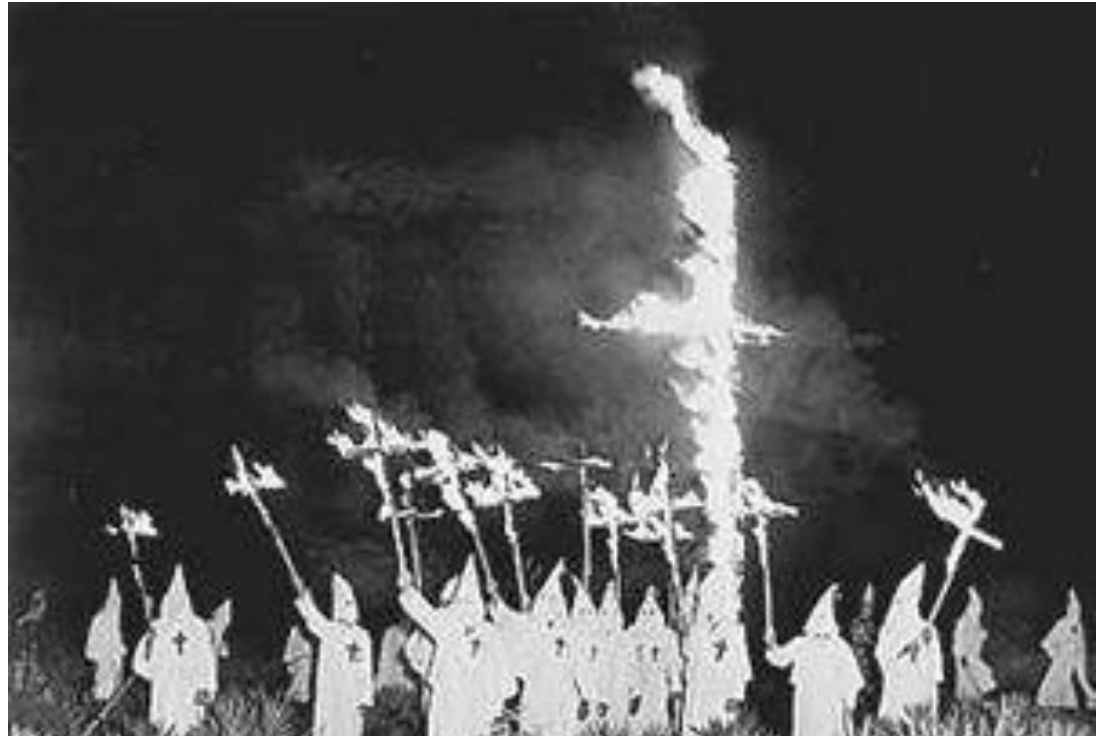
Hatred  
towards:

African-  
Americans

Jews

Catholics

Immigrants



The KKK reached the peak of its popularity in the mid-1920s, as racism, bigotry, and Nativism all reached their peaks. Anti-immigration laws prevented high levels of immigration from continuing. Brutally violent hate-crimes carried out by the KKK caused many to leave the group.

# Immigration is severely restricted during the 1920s.

- ❑ The Emergency Quota Act of 1921 prevented immigration from certain regions of the world, most notably from Southern and Eastern Europe.
- ❑ The National Origins Act further restricted immigration from anywhere except portions of Northern and Western Europe.
- ❑ Remember, immigration from China and Japan was already banned!





# Flappers!



# Margaret Sanger – Public Health Nurse

- The American Birth Control League was established by Margaret Sanger in the 1920s. It's known as Planned Parenthood today, and encourages access to both birth control and safe abortions procedures for pregnant women today.



Margaret Sanger's advocacy for birth control pills was considered scandalous during the 1920s, as was her campaign for safe abortion procedures. Her devotion to eugenics – that is sterilizing certain groups of people to prevent their reproduction was surprisingly less criticized...

# The Scopes Monkey Trial

When John Scopes, a substitute science teacher was arrested for teaching Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution in 1925 – in violation of Tennessee's Butler Act – a show trial ensued. It pitted the notorious defense lawyer Clarence Darrow against William Jennings Bryan, and it ended with many Americans in opposition to strict religious doctrines being taught in public schools. The conflict? Christian Fundamentalism VS. Science.

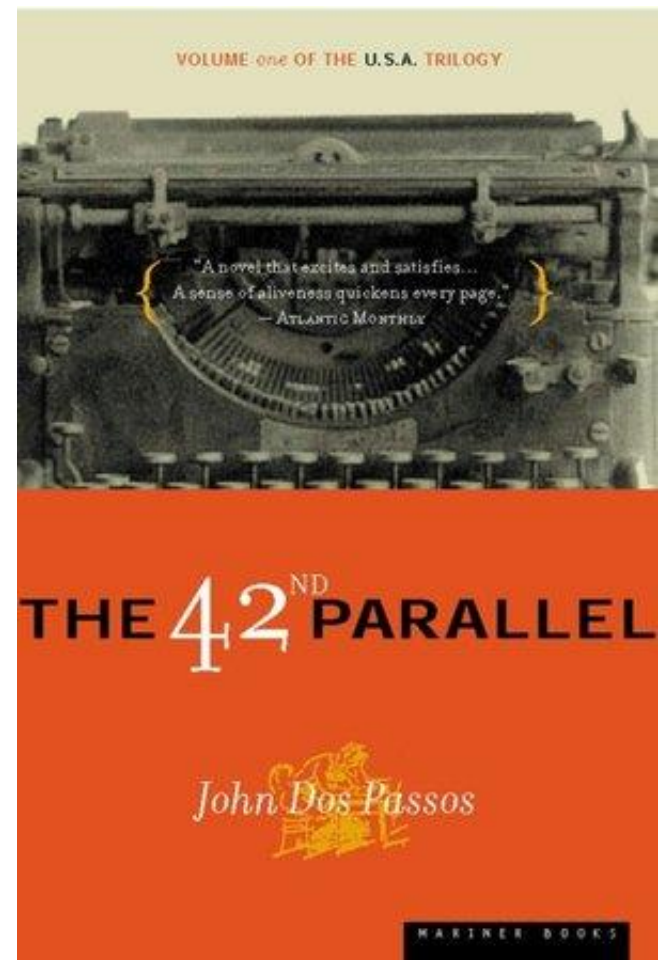


# Speakeasies and Violence

There were over 32,000 speakeasies in New York City alone, demonstrating the problem of Prohibition! No one in the major cities across the United States followed the laws. As a result, gangsters and organized crime profited and American federal agents died. Over seventy federal agents died on the job in the line of duty during the 1920s.

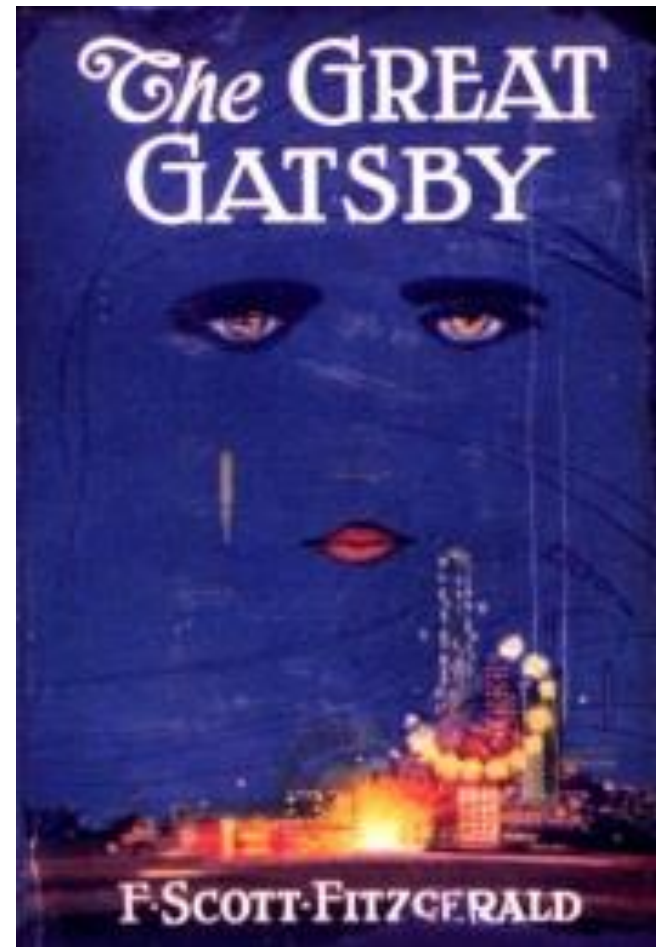
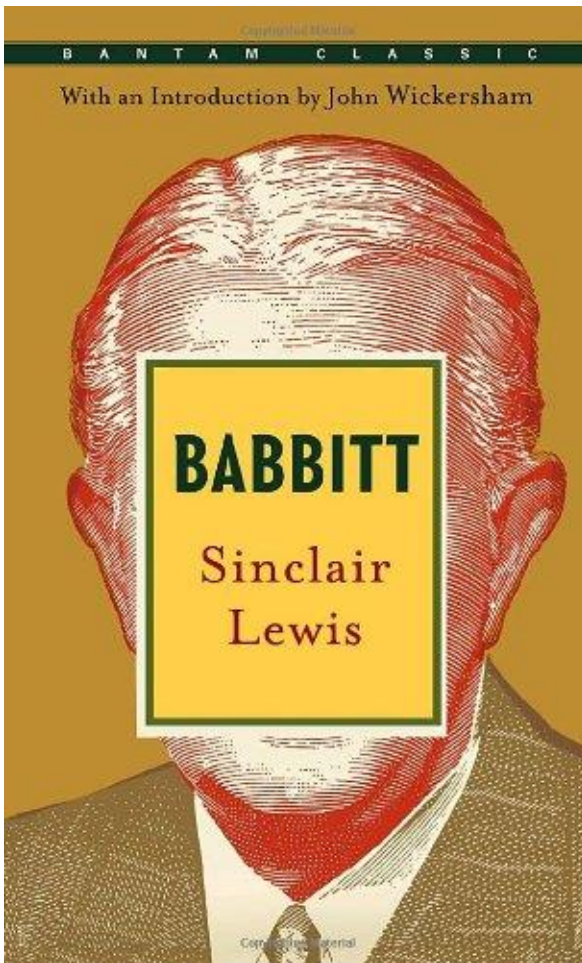


# “The Lost Generation” of Writers





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# New Forms of Mass Media

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Radio
- Filmstrips

The term “mass media” just means that the news reaches a lot of people at once. Today, television, the internet, and all forms of social media would qualify as well!



During the Great Depression, President Roosevelt used “fireside chats” on the radio to convince Americans that everything was going to be OK – in time.



## The Great Migration

The movement of African-American people from sharecropping plots in the Deep South to higher paying jobs in northern industrial cities was a major change during the 1920s. Artist Jacob Lawrence did a series of paintings on this topic, including this one.





## The Harlem Renaissance

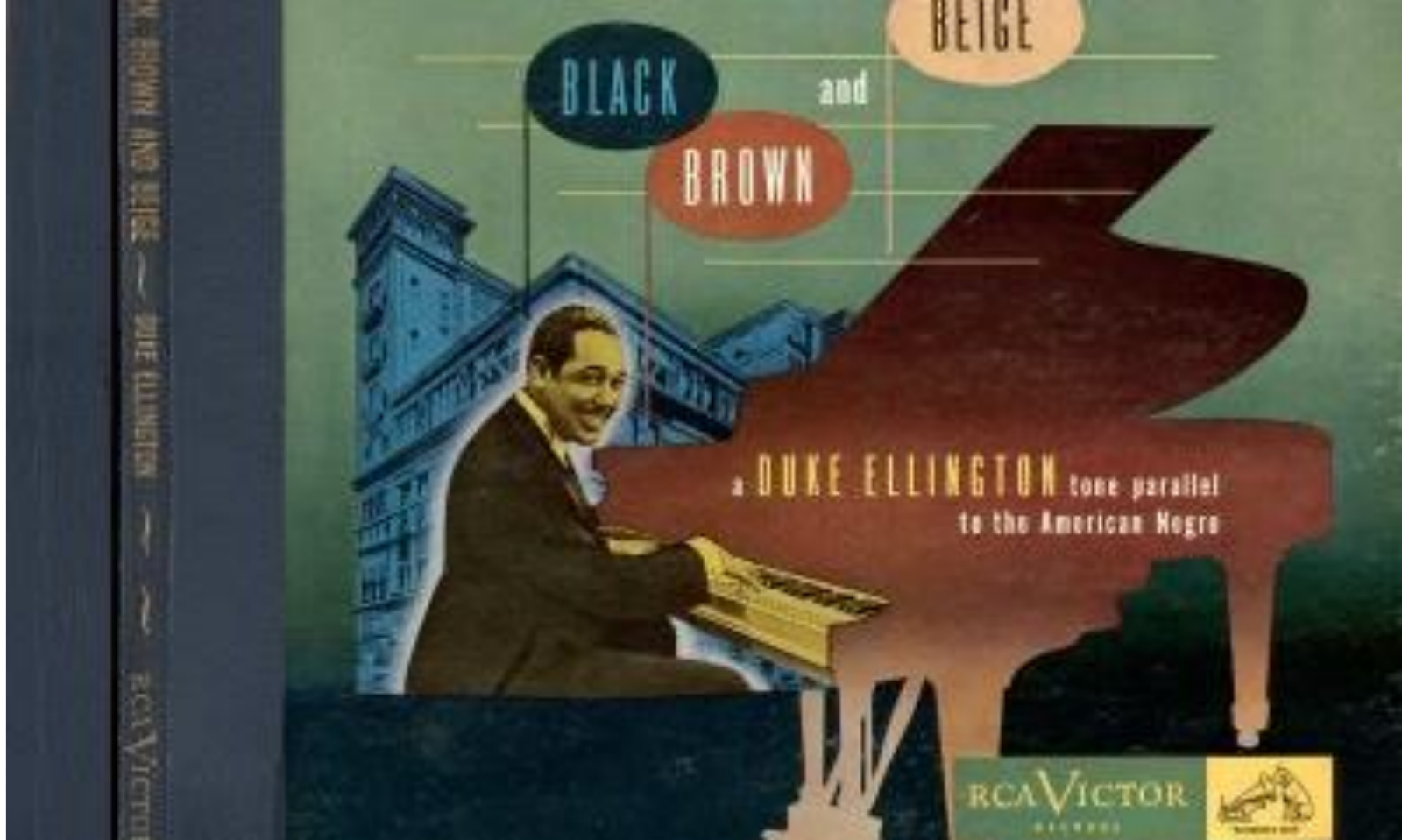
African-American poets, playwrights, artists, and authors were all celebrating black culture in their works during the Harlem Renaissance – a blossoming of African-American culture in the United States during the 1920s.



## Louis Armstrong – Jazz Musician

“Satchmo” was a cornet player and is credited with revolutionizing the form of music known today as “jazz.” His innovations and the improvisation of musicians during performances distinguish the genre of music.





## Duke Ellington – “Swing Music” Conductor

Duke Ellington was the man who developed “swing music” from jazz. He was also the first African-American to conduct an orchestra at Carnegie Hall.



## Bessie Smith – Empress of the Blues

Known for her melodic voice and sometime melancholy tunes, Bessie Smith was the “Empress of the Blues.”





## Paul Robeson – Stage Actor and Film Star

One of the first African-American stage and film stars, Paul Robeson would later be blacklisted – put on a no-hire list – for his sympathies to communism.

# W.E.B. DuBois – Co-Founder and President of the NAACP

- ❑ The NAACP battled against segregation and discrimination against African-Americans in the court system.
- ❑ Fought for Anti-Lynching bills.
- ❑ Opposed racist judges.
- ❑ Sponsored a legal fund that challenged racist policies on constitutional grounds.





# Marcus Garvey – Back to Africa

- Marcus Garvey was one of the leaders of the “Negro Nationalism” movement and the founder of the UNIA – Universal Negro Improvement Association. He encouraged black pride, organization of African-American communities for the purposes of economic independence, and eventually, came to advocate for a “Back to Africa” movement. Eventually, he was deported to Jamaica, because he was considered a threat to the United States of America.

